



P I R



BY KERSTEN CAMPBELL

(Based on a story from the author's family history)

Pray always, and I will pour out my Spirit upon you, and great shall be your blessing (D&C 19:38).

Ellen sniffed the moist sea air as she leaned over the bow of the great sailing vessel. The *Hudson* had sailed away from the coast of England just weeks before. Ellen had cried that day as she waved farewell to some of her friends and family in the cheering crowd. But they were tears of joy. Finally, after years of working and praying, her family's prayers had been answered. They were going to the land of their dreams—America, the land of Zion!

Ellen enjoyed the sea. During the few times she was able to slip away from taking care of her younger brothers and sisters, Ellen liked to lean over the bow of the ship and let her hair blow wild while she searched for dolphins and other sea creatures.

Ellen's heart sank as she heard a voice behind her. "Ellen! You must come. It's time for breakfast prayers."

"Coming," Ellen grumbled. Stepping back from the ship's railing, she tried her best to straighten her hair. "More prayers," Ellen thought as she hurried toward the hatch that led to the lower part of the ship where her family and all of the Saints ate and slept. Prayers in the morning, prayers at night, prayers by herself, prayers over meals, prayers with the Saints, and prayers with her family. Ellen bit her lip. She didn't want to be ungrateful for the miracle of sailing to America. But was there such a thing as too many prayers?

As Ellen approached her family, who were already kneeling, she wondered if her mother could tell what she was thinking. Ellen knelt down and looked at her mother's tired face. Life on the ship had not been easy for her mother. She, and many of the other passengers, had experienced terrible seasickness during the recent

storm that had rocked the ship for days.

Guiltily, Ellen bowed her head when the leader of their company asked her father to bless the food. She thought of her mother as he asked for a special blessing upon those who were sick. Then he thanked the Lord for the food and asked Him to protect the Saints that day.

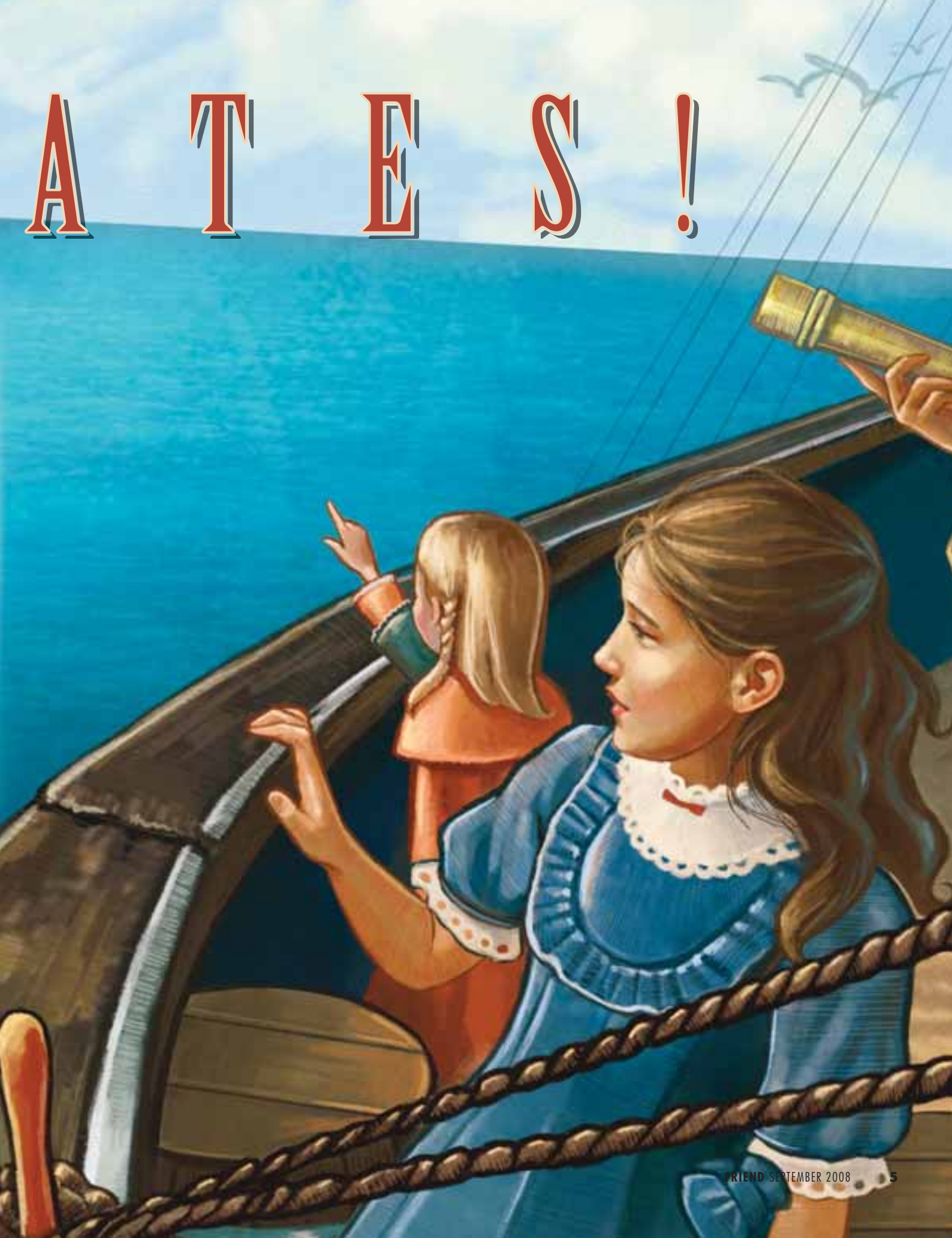
After breakfast, Ellen was assigned to care for her younger sisters on the deck. She took them to a place that was out of the way so they could watch the sailors rushing around shouting orders at each other. Ellen noticed the captain near the bow of the ship. He was searching the horizon with his looking glass. She wondered what it would be like to be the captain of a great ship. Suddenly, the captain's face grew pale, and he began to pace back and forth, stopping every few steps to look through his telescope.

"What could have upset the captain so much?" Ellen wondered. "Let's go look at the ocean," she whispered to her sisters, taking their hands in hers. At the bow of the ship, Ellen shaded her eyes and scanned the ocean. At first, all she could see was a small black dot on the horizon. But soon she saw what had made the captain's face grow so pale.

A large ship was sailing straight toward them at a fast clip. "Pirates!" whispered a man beside her. She could hear the fear in his voice. Panic ensued as parents began calling to each other to find family members and to take the children below. Ellen stood frozen, watching the men scramble around in search of anything that could be used as a weapon.

"Get those children away from the bow," yelled a crew member.

A T E S !



Ellen shook herself out of her frozen state and led her sisters down the hatch, but as soon as the children were with her mother, she rushed back up to the deck. She was worried about her father. He'd never fought anyone in his life, let alone pirates. She wondered what she could do to help.

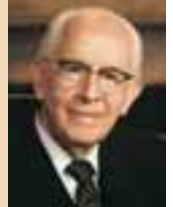
The passengers on the *Hudson* grew silent as the pirate ship sailed closer. Ellen stood next to her father and gasped as the ship came so close she could see the color of the pirates' hair! She looked up at her father and saw his lips moving in a silent prayer. Feeling frightened, she began her own silent prayer, asking Heavenly Father to forgive her for her bad attitude that morning.

The two ships sailed side by side for what seemed like an hour. The pirates and the passengers on the *Hudson* gazed at each other in silence.

"What are they doing?" Ellen whispered to her father. "They're probably wondering if our ship is worth

"There is no place for fear among men and women who place their trust in the Almighty, who do not hesitate to humble themselves in seeking divine guidance through prayer."¹

President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994)



robbing," her father whispered.

They waited in silence until suddenly there was a shout from the pirate ship. Ellen could feel her father's body tense. Then, to Ellen's surprise, the pirate ship slowly turned around and began sailing away from the *Hudson*.

Ellen let out the breath she had been holding. Silently, she offered up a prayer of thanks, remembering her father's prayer for safety that morning.

"The Lord was surely watching over us this day," her father said, laying a hand on Ellen's shoulder and watching the pirate ship sail away.

"He surely was," Ellen thought, and then she smiled, realizing she now knew that there was no such thing as too many prayers. ●

